

Clearly, our level of literacy is closely linked to our success in the world. If we fix this problem, the benefits will spread through our entire society. I firmly believe that if we know how to read, we will know how to succeed.

Secretary of Education Richard Riley recently confirmed the problem when he said:

Our Nation's reading scores are flat and have been flat for far too long . . . Too many of our young people are groping through school without having mastered the most essential and basic skill.

Riley said that "the most urgent task" facing American schools is to improve reading instruction. So we know the problem exists. We can rejoice there is a solution.

Right now, we can take a giant step forward simply by doing what we can to demonstrate and celebrate what works when it comes to basic reading instruction.

Mr. President, we know what works in teaching children and adults to read. We can point to evidence backed by more than 60 years of educational research and experience.

What works is when our teachers and administrators return their emphasis to the use of phonics as the basis of reading skills instruction. Phonics refers to that body of knowledge which allows us to break down the letters of the alphabet into sounds so that words can be deciphered and sounded out according to simple rules.

With phonics-based programs, students learn not by memorizing huge numbers of whole words, but rather by mastering the very limited number of sounds and corresponding letter combinations which are the building blocks of all words. With this essential grounding, they are better equipped to move ahead to learn more advanced reading skills and techniques.

I do not argue that phonics is the only answer to the many problems faced by today's teachers in improving reading skills. The breakdown of the family, the impact of television, the force of popular culture—all of these and more pose challenges which were unheard of a generation ago. But clearly it is time for the pendulum in emphasis to swing back toward phonics—and not away as we have been moving more and more in recent years.

Phonics-based programs work. History and statistics have proven it. Now, similar grassroots evidence is sprouting up in more and more parts of the country.

For example, in one of the poorest districts in Houston, TX, there is a success story from which all of us can learn. There at the Wesley Elementary School, its principal, Dr. Thaddeus Lott, has encouraged teachers to use proven methods such as phonics in a concentrated effort to improve reading skills. The program is working.

Students are leaving this school reading at two or three levels above their grade. Many go on to private academies because their achievement

levels are so far beyond the public schools they would otherwise attend.

Now, Dr. Lott has been appointed to a blue ribbon committee in the Houston Independent School District to expand his quality education techniques to other schools in this, the seventh largest school district in the Nation. It worked in Houston and it is working elsewhere.

Near one of Chicago's low-income housing projects, Mrs. Marva Collins of the Westside Preparatory School is making a real difference. Her phonics-based methods are helping all her students learn to read by the end of first grade. By the time her students reach third grade, they are memorizing poetry, discussing Shakespeare, and talking about early American history.

In Inglewood, CA, similar targeted programs have also proven highly successful.

Now, as the Washington Post reported last week, the State of California is urging all of its 7,700 school district "to place more emphasis on phonics" in order to reverse the dismal results they have been seeing on their statewide reading exams.

These are just a few recent examples—out of many—which show that the trend back to a renewed emphasis on phonics is growing. But much more needs to be done.

To help foster similar successful programs and to help focus public attention on what can and should be done, I propose to take the initiative in my home State of Oklahoma.

In the near future, I plan to help establish a limited in scope, privately funded, reading foundation in Oklahoma City.

Its purpose, broadly stated, will be to identify children, as well as adults, in need of enhanced reading instruction and to help them take advantage of a good phonics-based reading program that works.

If this limited demonstration project is successful, I would hope to expand it to Tulsa and perhaps to other cities throughout Oklahoma.

The goal is to show through private voluntary efforts that we as concerned citizens can address this one serious problem constructively, without resorting to Government mandates or vast infusions of Federal tax dollars which obviously have not worked.

Indeed, I want to make it very clear that I do not seek to establish a new Federal program, nor do I seek any new expenditure of taxpayer dollars. I propose no new legislation or Government mandate.

At the same time, I seek no direct intrusion into the day-to-day business of the public schools. I have long been opposed to Federal control of local education and I am not about to change my position now.

Rather, what I am talking about is fostering voluntary and cooperative efforts through the use of private funds, through persuasion, through example, and through a genuine concern for

helping our young people and others achieve success in life.

This is a good cause. I intend to demonstrate that what works in Dr. Lott's school in Houston and Mrs. Collins' school in Chicago can and will work in Oklahoma City. When it does, we will offer it throughout the State.

Mr. President, there is absolutely no excuse for us in the United States of America to lag behind other industrialized nations in our reading skills—we are going to take the initiative and correct it.

AN ANNIVERSARY TO REMEMBER

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, this past Saturday, March 23, marked the 13th anniversary of President Ronald Reagan's address to the Nation in which he outlined a vision of the future based on the common sense wisdom of developing a national defense against missile attack.

To commemorate this occasion, I ask unanimous consent that a transcript of President Reagan's remarks on missile defense from this historic speech be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(See exhibit 1.)

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, on that day in 1983, President Reagan announced his decision to begin the long march away from the suicidal defense doctrine known as mutual assured destruction. In one bold stroke, he single-handedly committed the Nation to an intense research and development program designed to harness our technology to the task of countering the threat posed by ballistic missiles, and to do it with measures that are defensive. Wouldn't it be better, he asked, "to save lives rather than to avenge them?"

In retrospect, we can see that it was a speech that truly rocked the world. In the context of the closing strategy of the cold war, it posed the decisive final challenge to the Soviet Union. Three years later, at the Reykjavik Summit, extraordinary Soviet efforts to deter Reagan from his commitment to missile defense failed. As a result, the evil empire's days were numbered and Soviet leader Gorbachev knew it.

In the context of domestic politics, Reagan's 1983 speech ignited a passionate debate over defense policy which still continues today. Within just hours after the speech, one of our distinguished colleagues in this body coined the term star wars. Opponents claimed Reagan's idea was a fantasy, that he wanted a perfect astrodome defense which would cost trillions of dollars.

Despite such rhetoric, in the context of science and technology, the speech helped focus inquiries on numerous fronts which led to remarkable breakthroughs. Is it technically feasible, at an affordable cost, to "intercept and destroy strategic ballistic missiles before they reach our own soil or that of

our allies?" In 1983, many critics answered "no." Today, such questions are themselves—as Reagan would say—largely "impotent and obsolete."

But still, 13 years later, America has not deployed, nor is it committed to deploy, any national missile defense system. Why? In a fundamental sense, the answer lies in the triumph of politics over science. The real technological barriers have been broken. We have the know-how. Even funding is no longer the real issue.

Rather, it is the many political barriers that remain, and they are formidable. The Soviet Union is gone, and with it, the perceived threat posed by its awesome missile arsenal. Proliferation of missiles to other countries continues, but we are told that any real concern about it is premature. Today's Democrat President, like the Democrat Congresses before him, argues strenuously that the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty should remain as the "cornerstone" of U.S. strategic defense policy. It prohibits the deployment of effective defenses on the theory that deterrence should rest solely on threat of instant retaliation—the same theory President Reagan sought to transcend.

So the struggle for national missile defense continues. "It will take years, probably decades, of effort on many fronts," President Reagan said, and he was right.

Today, I stand proudly with those who remain committed to the moral vision articulated by President Reagan: "That the human spirit must be capable of rising above dealing with other nations and human beings by threatening their existence."

We will continue the efforts President Reagan began. And I hope, that in marking this anniversary, we can take increased devotion to the cause of world peace and freedom—that we can learn from the wisdom, the foresight, the courage and the example of President Reagan.

Like Ronald Reagan before us, we pursue this cause not because some public opinion poll told us it was the popular thing to do. We act because we know it is the right thing to do for our country and for future generations.

EXHIBIT 1

ADDRESS TO THE NATION ON NATIONAL SECURITY BY PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN, MARCH 23, 1983

The calls for cutting back the defense budget come in nice, simple arithmetic. They're the same kind of talk that led the democracies to neglect their defenses in the 1930's and invited the tragedy of World War II. We must not let that grim chapter of history repeat itself through apathy or neglect.

This is why I'm speaking to you tonight—to urge you to tell your Senators and Congressmen that you know we must continue to restore our military strength. If we stop in midstream, we will send a signal of decline, of lessened will, to friends and adversaries alike. Free people must voluntarily, through open debate and democratic means, meet the challenge that totalitarians pose by compulsion. It's up to us, in our time, to choose and choose wisely between the hard but necessary task of preserving peace and

freedom and the temptation to ignore our duty and blindly hope for the best while the enemies of freedom grow stronger day by day.

The solution is well within our grasp. But to reach it, there is simply no alternative but to continue this year, in this budget, to provide the resources we need to preserve the peace and guarantee our freedom.

Now, thus far tonight I've shared with you my thoughts on the problems of national security we must face together. My predecessors in the Oval Office have appeared before you on other occasions to describe the threat posed by Soviet power and have proposed steps to address that threat. But since the advent of nuclear weapons, those steps have been increasingly directed toward deterrence of aggression through the promise of retaliation.

This approach to stability through offensive threat has worked. We and our allies have succeeded in preventing nuclear war for more than three decades. In recent months, however, my advisers, including in particular the Joint Chiefs of Staff, have underscored the necessity to break out of a future that relies solely on offensive retaliation for our security.

Over the course of these discussions, I've become more and more deeply convinced that the human spirit must be capable of rising above dealing with other nations and human beings by threatening their existence. Feeling this way, I believe we must thoroughly examine every opportunity for reducing tensions and for introducing greater stability into the strategic calculus on both sides.

One of the most important contributions we can make is, of course, to lower the level of all arms, and particularly nuclear arms. We're engaged right now in several negotiations with the Soviet Union to bring about a mutual reduction of weapons. I will report to you a week from tomorrow my thoughts on that score. But let me just say, I'm totally committed to this course.

If the Soviet Union will join with us in our effort to achieve major arms reduction, we will have succeeded in stabilizing the nuclear balance. Nevertheless, it will still be necessary to rely on the specter of retaliation, on mutual threat. And that's a sad commentary on the human condition. Wouldn't it be better to save lives than to avenge them? Are we not capable of demonstrating our peaceful intentions by applying all our abilities and our ingenuity to achieving a truly lasting stability? I think we are. Indeed, we must.

After careful consultation with my advisers, including the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I believe there is a way. Let me share with you a vision of the future which offers hope. It is that we embark on a program to counter the awesome Soviet missile threat with measures that are defensive. Let us turn to the very strengths in technology that spawned our great industrial base and that have given us the quality of life we enjoy today.

What if free people could live secure in the knowledge that their security did not rest upon the threat of instant U.S. retaliation to deter a Soviet attack, that we could intercept and destroy strategic ballistic missiles before they reached our own soil or that of our allies?

I know this is a formidable, technical task, one that may not be accomplished before the end of this century. Yet, current technology has attained a level of sophistication where it's reasonable for us to begin this effort. It will take years, probably decades of effort on many fronts. There will be failures and setbacks, just as there will be successes and breakthroughs. And as we proceed, we must remain constant in preserving the nuclear

deterrent and maintaining a solid capability for flexible response. But isn't it worth every investment necessary to free the world from the threat of nuclear war? We know it is.

In the meantime, we will continue to pursue real reductions in nuclear arms, negotiating from a position of strength that can be ensured only by modernizing our strategic forces. At the same time, we must take steps to reduce the risk of a conventional military conflict escalating to nuclear war by improving our nonnuclear capabilities.

America does possess—now—the technologies to attain very significant improvements in the effectiveness of our conventional, nonnuclear forces. Proceeding boldly with these new technologies, we can significantly reduce any incentive that the Soviet Union may have to threaten attack against the United States or its allies.

As we pursue our goal of defensive technologies, we recognize that our allies rely upon our strategic offensive power to deter attacks against them. Their vital interests and ours are inextricably linked. Their safety and ours are one. And no change in technology can or will alter that reality. We must and shall continue to honor our commitments.

I clearly recognize that defensive systems have limitations and raise certain problems and ambiguities. If paired with offensive systems, they can be viewed as fostering an aggressive policy, and no one wants that. But with these considerations firmly in mind, I call upon the scientific community in our country, those who gave us nuclear weapons, to turn their great talents now to the cause of mankind and world peace, to give us the means of rendering these nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete.

Tonight, consistent with our obligations of the ABM treaty and recognizing the need for closer consultation with our allies, I'm taking an important first step. I am directing a comprehensive and intensive effort to define a long-term research and development program to begin to achieve our ultimate goal of eliminating the threat posed by strategic nuclear missiles. This could pave the way for arms control measures to eliminate the weapons themselves. We seek neither military superiority nor political advantage. Our only purpose—one all people share—is to search for ways to reduce the danger of nuclear war.

My fellow Americans, tonight we're launching an effort which holds the promise of changing the course of human history. There will be risks, and results take time. But I believe we can do it. As we cross this threshold, I ask for your prayers and your support.

Thank you, good night, and God bless you.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask that there now be a period for the transaction of routine morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.